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What do you want to eat when you come home after a long, tiring day at school? Is it spinach? Is it porridge? Is it sprouts? Most likely not. You probably want to relax in a chair and sip Coke while eating chips. So would I. But what if the spinach, porridge and sprouts tasted as good as Coke and chips? Wow! This combination of health and taste is just what is needed to make the food perfect.

Healthy food is vital for our well-being. With our hectic lifestyles, we require adequate nourishment. It should contain balanced amounts of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre. Though healthy food is extremely important, would a diner even contemplate eating it if it were insipid? I think healthy but bland food is a total waste as it is unappetising. Imagine eating oats and boiled vegetables day after day!

Healthy food has to be made scrumptious so that it appeals to our sense of taste. Ayurveda places great emphasis on the concept of shad rasa (six tastes) - sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent. These should be present in balanced proportions in the diet for optimum health. Aromatic spices, herbs and seasonings like lemon juice, green chutney and so on can make any dish mouth-watering.

The problems start when food is eaten only to cater to the whims and fancies of our taste buds. This is a gilt-edged invitation to malnutrition, diabetes, obesity etc. Food is to the body as petrol is to a car, and junk food can be as hazardous as adulterated petrol. Coke has caffeine and refined sugar which play havoc with the body clock and ruin our teeth; chips have saturated fat and "empty calories" - you get the picture.

I hope I have convinced you that neither just healthy nor just tasty food is the solution. The answer lies in making healthy food tasty. Just to help you, here are some yummy and healthy snacks: cheese and crackers, flavoured yoghurt, granola bars and string cheese. And if these aren't available, there are always fruits. Be creative! Bon appetit!!